

## **The City of Renton and the Highlands Task Force - Realizing Our Vision**

Councilmember Terri Briere

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The City of Renton and the Highlands community have collaborated to work toward a common goal for the community and created the Highlands Task Force. We have established a great partnership and have made tremendous progress toward the revitalization of the Highlands. Last fall, Phase II of the Highlands Task Force task was established and this group has been working hard on several policies for the development and revitalization of the Highlands neighborhood to build on the success of the work accomplished by the initial task force.

With a goal of creating a welcoming and vital neighborhood, the task force identified a number of topics for future review and consideration. These topics were presented to the community at a public meeting in February. Over 175 members of the community attended this meeting, representing residents, business owners and other community leaders. The task force and members of the community worked together to identify their priorities to help set the path for a safe, beautiful and desirable place to live. They identified the following priorities and areas of emphasis:

- Reducing crime and creating a safe community.
- Creating a walkable community.
- Ensuring a safe and attractive neighborhood by emphasizing code enforcement.
- Investing in infrastructure and enhancing the business area.

In April, the task force began a comprehensive examination of these topics and will continue to work on a plan through October. Each of the 15 current task force members is committed to working eight to ten hours a month. They will present their recommendations to the Renton City Council at the end of the year.

One of the greatest achievements of this process is creating a successful partnership between the city and the Highlands community. The city has several resources and programs that are available to the community. Whether it is helping homeowners with repairs through the Housing Repair Assistance Program, or sponsoring a community clean-up through the neighborhood program, or organizing volunteers from the neighborhood to help the elderly and seniors with simple chores, this partnership benefits everyone. With individuals, groups, organizations, and the city all working together we can make tremendous progress. Together we can realize our vision for the community.